

# Formative Evaluation of the Colorado Health Assessment & Planning System (CHAPS)

Haley Stewart, Alison Long, MPH  
& Cambria Brown, MPH  
Office of Planning, Partnerships & Improvement

## Background

CHAPS assists local public health agencies (LPHAs) meet assessment and planning requirements of the 2008 Public Health Act. LPHAs are required to complete county or regional public health improvement plans (PHIP) on a five-year cycle based on community health assessments. The CDPHE's Office of Planning, Partnerships and Improvement (OPPI) is responsible for providing direct technical assistance to LPHAs throughout this process.

During the end of the first five-year cycle, a formative evaluation was conducted to assess the usability and effectiveness of resources and technical assistance provided to LPHAs by the OPPI.

## Research Questions

**1) What are the strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in CHAPS tools, resources, and OPPI technical assistance?**

**2) What is the impact of the CHAPS process on local public health agencies' capacity to carry out public health assessment and planning efforts?**

## Methods

A utilization-focused evaluation approach was taken in partnership with the OPPI. A triangulation mixed methods design was used to collect data on the same topic through two different methods:

- 2015 LPHA Annual Reports to the OPPI (n=50)
  - Quantitative and qualitative data were collected from a 9-item "Assessment and Planning" section.
  - LPHAs are contractually required to submit annual grant reports for local planning and support funding.
- Key Informant Interviews (n=15)
  - 15 1-hour key informant interviews with LPHA CHAPS staff.
  - A 27-item semi-structured interview topic guide was developed to cover: current assessment and planning activities, tools/resources, cross-agency sharing, partnerships, and overall impact of CHAPS.

## Results

### Resources & Technical Assistance:

CHAPS resources, such as the website, tools, templates, data sources, and data assistance, along with technical assistance provide support for LPHAs throughout the CHAPS process.

#### Strengths:

- Templates are scalable and flexible
- CHAPS Framework is divided into accessible and understandable parts
- Resource materials were comprehensive
- OPPI staff and Health Statistics staff were personable

#### Weaknesses:

- LPHAs are looking for more feedback on their CHAPS progress through technical assistance communication in addition to technical support
- Specific technical assistance contacts are not apparent
- Website Resource are not intuitive to locate
- LPHAs used different methodologies to choose priority issues, which weakens the comparison across agencies and counties

*"I just really appreciate the ability to make a one-size-fits-all [process] - from an El Paso-size health department down to Hinsdale...it is so scalable regardless of the size of the health department."*

### PHIP Implementation & Capacity Context:

At the time of this evaluation, **100% of LPHAs were implementing their public health improvement plans**. Changes were made based on fluctuating resources and political opportunity .

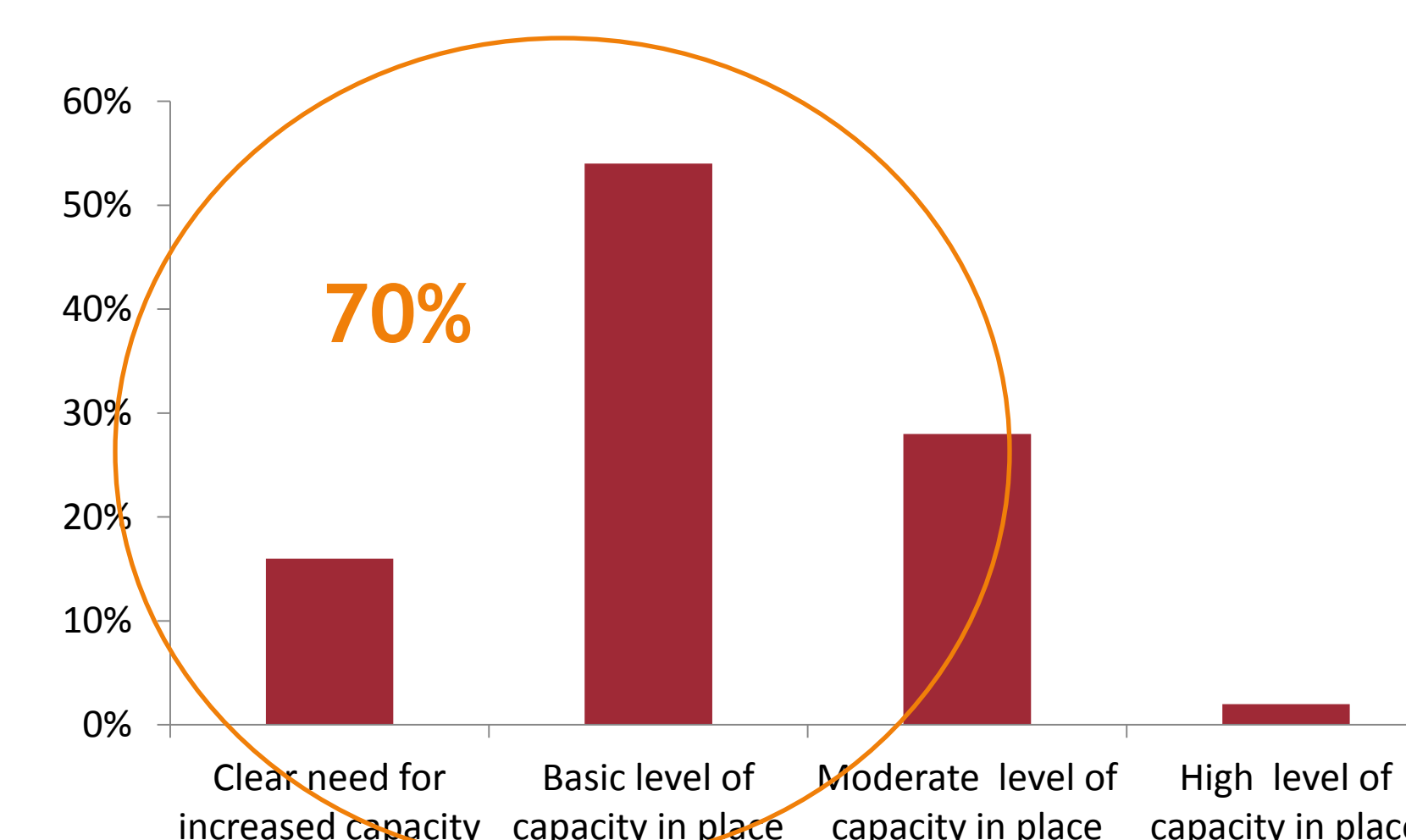
**Identified common challenge:** PHIP monitoring and evaluation methods and best practices

**Identified available asset:** CHAPS provides an evidence-informed approach to doing community health assessment and planning

LPHA assessment and planning capacity varied, presenting both challenges in outcome measurement and addressing needs and assets in support from the public health system.

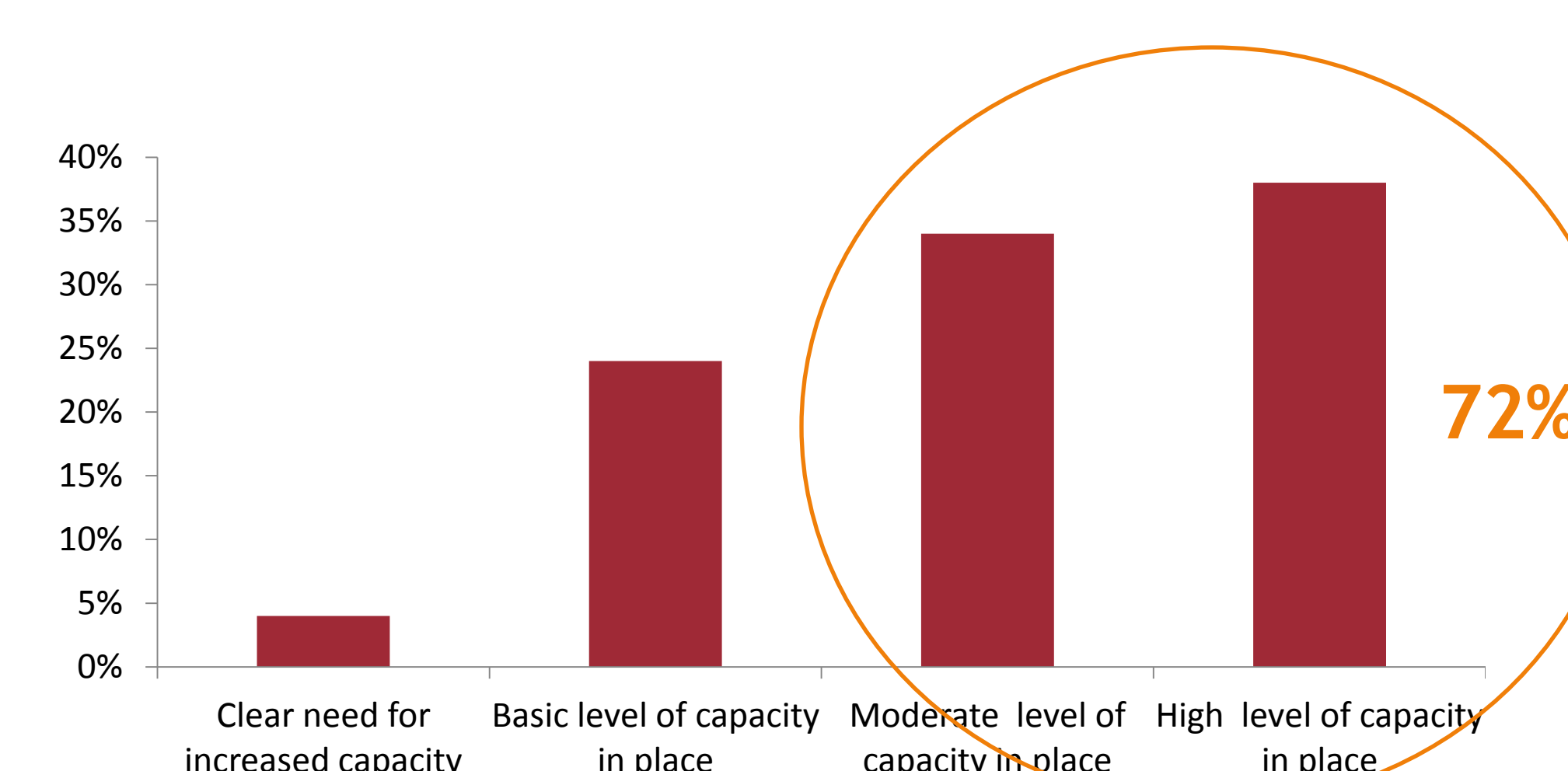
#### Challenge:

Ability to measure outcomes and address needed improvements: (n=50)



#### Asset:

Supported by elected officials and well connected with other system partners: (n=50)



## Recommendations

The CHAPS process system was found to have had a positive and unifying effect on assessment and planning capacity of LPHAs and the overall Colorado public health.

*"I think that [CHAPS] is helping to get everybody more on the same page to engage their communities and to go through a process with community stakeholders to determine evidence-based strategies that they can work together on... it will build the capacity of lots of public health agencies to do this [work] a little bit more systematically."*

Therefore, recommendations are based on needs, strengths, and weaknesses, and reflect gaps found in the results.

### Resource & Technical Assistance Recommendations

PHIP Evaluation and Monitoring support, training & resources

Categorized technical assistance from the OPPI

CHAPS support for alignment between LPHA and non-profit hospital community health needs assessment processes

Environmental Health inclusion in CHAPS

Crosswalk between CHAPS and PHAB work

Advocate for county and community level data

Workforce management tools and strategies

Data collection, analysis, interpretation and communication capacity building

*"...CHAPS has made our public health department known in the community."*

For questions, comments and full report, please contact:  
Haley Stewart, Office of Planning, Partnerships and Improvement  
haley.stewart@state.co.us